

**Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Landmark High School
320 South Main
Spanish Fork, Utah 84660**

November 4, 2004



Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
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Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Landmark High School
320 South Main
Spanish Fork, Utah 84660**

November 4, 2004

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, November 4, 2004, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Landmark High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Joe Kelly is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Landmark High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Landmark High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
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LANDMARK HIGH SCHOOL
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Counseling

Melissa Gonzalez Counselor

Support Staff

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An’Jalee Burningham Education Tech

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Kristopher Cary	Harlow John	Elaine Owen

Other Staff

Merrill Black	Leslie Gleaves	Regan Vance
Cody Christensen	Lucila Ortiz	Mike Wing
Suzanne Fisher	Gary Runolfson	

LANDMARK HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Landmark High School is to provide quality educational alternatives in a safe, caring environment of acceptance, understanding, and respect, so that each student may achieve personal, academic, and career goals leading to responsible citizenship.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

We Believe That:

- We have the ability to make a positive difference in the life of every student.
- Each person is uniquely gifted and has infinite individual worth and potential.
- Every person has an inherent disposition to learn and progress within their unique and individual abilities and learning styles.
- Optimal learning takes place in a climate of love, caring, and mutual respect and trust.
- Each person has rights with accompanying responsibilities and accountability.
- Feelings of self-worth enhance learning and the quality of life.
- Performing personally meaningful work and service contributes to the quality of life for self and others.
- Individual integrity contributes to personal growth and a better society.
- The concept of family is the foundation of our society with education as a shared responsibility of the home, school, and community.
- The process of democracy is dependent upon an educated and involved citizenry.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Ralph P. Vander Heide, Ph.D., Utah State Office of Education Consultant in Accreditation, Team Chairperson

Lori Thorn, Alpine Life and Learning Center, Alpine School District

James M. Rees, Provo High School, Provo City School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT
LANDMARK HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

The building that now is the home of Landmark High School was constructed by built by the federal government in 1934 as a work project for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). At the time, the building was utilized (as the Spanish Fork High School gymnasium) for town and church meetings, dances, and other recreational uses.

In 1962, a new facility was constructed to house Spanish Fork High School. The old building then became the gymnasium, shop, and cafeteria for Spanish Fork Junior High School. In January of 1975, Spanish Fork Intermediate School was completed and the junior high moved to that new building, leaving the Landmark building vacant.

Nebo Alternative High School was opened in the building in the fall of 1979 to serve students who were not successful in the traditional school setting. During the 1987-88 school year the name was changed to Landmark High School.

Since classroom sizes were much smaller that those of other schools, the school promoted a friendly atmosphere between students and staff. Teachers also used specialized teaching techniques in an attempt to reach and motivate students.

The building was placed on the National Register of Historical Places on April 1, 1985 because of its unique architectural style, and because it is one of the last buildings built by the CCC that is still in use.

Since 1979 various building improvements have been made to the school, and in 1996 it was completely remodeled.

Landmark High School still serves students in an alternative setting. Students are also allowed to access several vocational and college programs. The main emphasis at Landmark today is on helping students become successful in a school setting and gain confidence in themselves.

The profile of Landmark High School is extensive. The following kinds of data were included in the profile: student demographic information, student mobility rates, special education enrollment, class size, behavior data, and attendance information. Test scores are given in several different areas including SAT scores, CRT scores, SRI reading test scores, and TABE scores. Student, teacher, and parent opinion survey data has also been included. Graphic overviews of the data have been developed that clearly portray the relationship between the various sets of information that were collected through the

profiling process. Narrative summaries provide a meaningful translation of data that should provide useful information for school improvement planning. The Visiting Team observed that stakeholders plan to use the profile data to guide this planning.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

The staff at Landmark has done an impressive job of gathering and disaggregating pertinent data. They have taken a hard look at student achievement, and they are using the data to make positive changes. The data is broken down by ethnicity and by gender, both of which are significant factors for students at Landmark. The mobility rate is also a significant part of the student profile. There is a core of students that begin and end the year, but most students enter and exit at many different times during the year.

b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

At this time the profile appears to be comprehensive. The school employed a systematic process of collecting and managing profile data, which provides a rich and comprehensive description of the school. The various sets of data that were collected for the profile have been analyzed and integrated to provide the “big picture” about the performance of Landmark High School.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

The Visiting Team has no recommendations at this time. The team commends the school for having in place a data management system to regularly update the profile. Stakeholders under direction of the school leadership intend to develop a longitudinal analysis of trends as part of the school improvement process.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

Both the school’s self-study report and meetings the Visiting Team held with stakeholders indicate that all of the teachers, administrators, and students, as well as the school’s support staff, were involved in the self-study. The Visiting Team recognizes the difficulty of involving parents of students in this alternative school setting. Many are not cooperative. It is commendable that many parents were involved in previous years, and that there is a continued effort by the school to recruit parents to help in the total education of these students.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The staff recognizes its strengths and areas in which teachers are effective; yet they also have a frank and accurate view of limitations and areas that must be strengthened. It appears to the Visiting Team that stakeholders are involved in a process of continuous improvement and are personally committed to the improvement of student achievement.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Landmark High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Personal and Social Responsibility
2. Communication Skills
3. Interpersonal Skills

A consensus-building process was established for defining the DRSLs that involved all stakeholders. It appears that the process of identifying learning outcomes was initiated after first reviewing the school's beliefs, mission, and profile, as well as studying some research on effective practices and what students need to know to prepare for post-high school life (i.e., student learning needs were analyzed).

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

A consensus-building process has been established that involves the school community in defining the school's beliefs, mission, and goals. The mission statement describes the purpose and direction for the school, and reflects a focus on student learning as the top priority for the school. The beliefs, mission, and learning outcomes are aligned. They are clearly stated and free of jargon. The school's belief statements address key issues pertinent to effective decision-making and policy development. It appears that the implications of the school's commitment to acting upon the beliefs were fully considered prior to finalizing the list of beliefs. The mission and beliefs describe a compelling purpose and direction for the school.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

This has been accomplished to a great extent. The beliefs, aligned with the mission statement, reflect a commitment to student learning as the top priority of Landmark High School.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The DRSLs are focused on improving student learning and aligned as indicated above.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

The curriculum, in its overall content and design, its organizational arrangements, and its academic and instructional policies, represents a consistent and effective implementation of the school's philosophy and objectives.

Essential knowledge and skills are identified and given priority in the development of curricula. Curricula are developed as defined by the Utah Core standards. The development of the school's curriculum addresses the diverse learning needs of students.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

Periodic evaluations of curricula are conducted. The coordination and articulation of curricula leads to a shared vision for student learning that is held by teachers, parents, and other members of the school community.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

Instructional strategies and learning activities are aligned with most of the instructional goals, and support students' expectations for learning. All students

interviewed by the Visiting Team reported that they had improved, even “greatly improved” their academic performance after moving to Landmark High School.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

Efforts are made to establish a positive academic climate; however, instructional strategies do not always fully support different the learning styles of students. Most coursework consisted of lectures, textbooks, and worksheets.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Students are consistently provided with a variety of opportunities to receive additional assistance to improve their learning. Students may also engage in extracurricular activities.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

The assessment of student learning includes an adequate sample of performance that is representative of what students can do, and provides sufficient evidence of this.

The reporting system to parents seems to be thorough and effective. It provides for open channels of communication among parents, teachers, and administrators.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

Most assessments are linked to specific instructional uses that promote students’ achievement and continuous improvement of their learning.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

Grading practices and assessments of student learning appear to be fair. However, the faculty and administration should continue to investigate different forms of assessments in order to more effectively assess student comprehension. The faculty and administration should consider the use of additional means of both formative and summative assessment and the application of the outcomes to the improvement of instruction.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

This is accomplished to a great extent at Landmark High School. The school has established an academic learning climate in which teaching and learning are clearly supported. There is a strong focus on instructional goals aligned with the ability levels of the students and taking into account their prior difficulties in school. Students feel valued and important. The accomplishments of students, faculty members, and other staff members are recognized. The administration is very accessible to students, parents, and the teaching staff.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The leadership at Landmark High School places great emphasis on achieving this end. The decision-making process ensures consistency with the school's beliefs, mission, and goals.

The analysis of pertinent data related to the specific issues under consideration informs the decision-making process. Stakeholders, especially faculty members, have input in major decision making.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The administration actively monitors student progress in achieving the essential knowledge and skills for their learning.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

Schoolwide policies and operational procedures are consistent with the school's beliefs and mission, and are designed to maximize opportunities for student effectiveness.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The alignment is very good, as noted elsewhere in this report.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

This appears to be accomplished to the extent possible. School leadership has significant problems in getting information and feedback from parents.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

The Visiting Team was impressed with the feeling of shared enthusiasm felt among the faculty, students, and parents. The students feel extremely connected to the school and expressed gratitude for the small classes and “family-like” atmosphere. Parents are involved in the educational process by attending parent/teacher conferences and participating in the development of SEOPs. Faculty and staff members also visit the homes of their students as part of the parent/teacher conference process. The School accepts students from the three local high schools within the district. This is a large area that requires a great deal of community building.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

The school makes a commendable effort to reach out to most parents and families to help engage them as partners in the learning process. The school is encouraged to continue efforts to build and more fully develop collaborative networks within the community.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

Professional development programs for administrators, teachers, and support staff focus on the knowledge and skills required to fulfill and increase performance expectations for their roles as mentors, and to contribute to student achievement.

Professional development programs such as Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens (created by Sean Covey) are designed to facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge and skills by a team of staff members.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The school sustains the commitment to continuous improvement and renewal.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

Landmark High School meets this standard. The State Core Curriculum is met in alignment with the specific goals and learning outcomes of the school. The educational program has been collaboratively developed. The school's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired learning outcomes and should prepare students for success in their post-high school endeavors.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students. There is one full-time counselor for the 110 students (the number of students varies a bit).

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is quite well met. The school plant provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs and incorporates some aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere. Some stakeholders mentioned that more space would be helpful; the Visiting Team strongly concurs.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is partially met. The school library media program is a primary resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support. The school does not have a certified librarian. However, the teacher who serves as librarian provides instruction, resources, and activities to promote independent use of ideas and information. Furthermore, a "consulting librarian," who is fully licensed and who is employed in a local junior high school, visits the school several times a year.

Standard V – Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interest of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to

access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met. The school improvement plan focuses on schoolwide desired results for student learning (DRSLs). The goals are measurable, sufficiently challenging, and attainable within a reasonable time frame. Each year the school submits to the State Accreditation Committee (SAC) an annual report on progress with its SIP.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

Most professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are properly endorsed for the subjects they are assigned. The school librarian is not certified. (However, see Standard IV above.)

Standard VIII – Administration

This standard is met. The administration of Landmark High School provides commendable educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out necessary administrative procedures.

Standard IX – Teacher Load

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or NAAS.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met. Landmark supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional interests and experiences for learning to take place.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

It is very adequate. Stakeholders have prepared a timeline, which lists specific desired learning outcomes and indicates the names of persons responsible for overseeing accomplishment of the goals. There are plans for continuing the self-evaluation process in order to establish new goals when current goals have been accomplished. The action plan is aligned with the profile, beliefs, mission statement, DRSLs, and analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?*

The Visiting Team observed that there is broad “buy-in” to the goals of the action plan. All stakeholders appear to understand what needs to be accomplished. They understand the steps outlined in the action plan that have been decided upon by the faculty, administration, students, and parents.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?*

The Visiting Team feels strongly that the goals will be accomplished. The monitoring process and the steps leading to achievement have been well thought out. It appears that all staff members are involved in implementing the SIP. Already, due to the extensive profiling, stakeholders are aware of new and emerging goals that will need to be addressed in future action plans.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the school for having prepared an excellent self-study. All parts of the process have been covered in detail. Clearly, Landmark High School understands the required procedure.
- The Visiting Team commends the board and administration for keeping class sizes manageable.

- The Visiting Team commends the school for incorporating into the program *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens* by Sean Covey.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for the fostering, nurturing atmosphere that exists at Landmark High School. Both students and parents used the word “family” in referring to the structure and learning environment at Landmark High School.
- The Visiting Team commends the faculty for working together cooperatively and amicably.
- The Visiting Team commends the administration and faculty for including a daily “advisory period” in the class schedule. Both teachers and students find it effective.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to explore effective ways of delivering instruction, and that it avoid worksheets and so-called “traditional approaches” to the extent that it is feasible. Much modern research indicates that varying approaches to learning will lessen the resistance of reluctant learners.
- The Visiting Team recommends that teachers expand the types of assessment used, and use assessment for the improvement of instruction.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school establish a schoolwide tardy policy.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the board and all stakeholders explore the possibility of expanding the facilities. More room is needed at Landmark High School.